

Inspection of a good school: Dogsthorpe Infant School

Central Avenue, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 4LH

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

Outcome

Dogsthorpe Infant School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Rebecca Waters. This school is part of Hampton Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Helen Price, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alistair Kingsley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about coming to this school. They love the time they get to be with their friends and staff. Pupils respect the school values of 'dream, believe, shine'. They like knowing exactly how adults expect them to behave. Pupils obediently follow clear rules and established routines. They also trust the adults to look after them. This makes pupils feel comfortable and secure.

This sense of warmth and care results in pupils who learn and play happily together. They talk about being part of a 'class family' and looking out for each other.

Pupils are keen to do well. Their favourite lessons are reading and mathematics. They also like sports lessons and learning about the world around them. They know that adults want them to succeed. Pupils like to get 'shine certificates' and time with the school reading and therapy dogs. They enjoy having visitors in school and trips out. They talk enthusiastically about a recent zoo visit and having a science visitor in school.

Clubs such as football and gymnastics are popular. Pupils learn to play a musical instrument. They are taught how to brush their teeth properly, which they practise every day after lunch.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has rightly continued to focus on developing an ambitious curriculum for reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have also recently updated other aspects of the wider curriculum, including within early years. Teachers are now very clear about what they need to teach and in what order, across all subjects and year groups.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable and have trained staff well. As a result, teachers provide clear instructions to pupils in lessons and address pupils' misconceptions. Staff regularly check on what pupils have learned. Leaders know that they have some pupils who still have key gaps in their knowledge. There is a determination to plug these gaps and additional support is provided. However, at present, some pupils have gaps that are not being addressed quickly enough. This means that some pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have made effective changes to how some core subjects are taught and the content of their curriculum. However, these updates are quite recent. Teachers are committed yet are still getting used to the new curriculum content. As a result, staff are not yet adapting lessons with sufficient precision to meet the needs of specific pupils. They do not always provide work which is precisely matched to the needs of pupils.

Reading is prioritised throughout the school. The new phonics programme is taught effectively. As a result, most pupils can recall the sounds they need to read well. Every child has a reading book to take home. Leaders are tenacious in checking up on gaps pupils have in their reading knowledge. Additional reading interventions are in place. However, some pupils who find reading tricky are not catching up quickly enough. This is because some of the support is not focused specifically on what pupils really need to work on. In addition, some of the books pupils take home to read are not as well matched to the sounds pupils have just learned in class. This means weaker readers do not get sufficient practice at reading books with sounds they have recently learned. This hinders their reading fluency.

There are bespoke plans in place for pupils with SEND to ensure specialist advice is acted on. Staff manage pupils with complex needs with care and sensitivity. Leaders are working on providing staff with more support on how to successfully engage these pupils with learning.

Pupils, including the very youngest, behave well. Pupils are polite and line up sensibly. They show respect for property and demonstrate the importance of tidying up after snack time. Pupils are proud that they help each other and listen well to adults. Most pupils now attend school regularly. Leaders are quick to follow up those who miss too much school.

Pupils understand fundamental British values in an age-appropriate way. They learn about democracy through voting for their school council, for eco-warriors or which books to read in class. Regular school trips and visitors give pupils experiences they would otherwise not have. Pupils are taught about how to have healthy minds and bodies.

Staff fully support the school's vision and values. Staff report that leaders check on their well-being regularly.

Governors and trustees provide effective challenge and support. They share the school's determination to provide a strong education for the pupils. They fulfil their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff working in the school have completed the required vetting checks. The school provides regular safeguarding training for staff and governors.

The school provides effective pastoral support for its pupils. This means pupils are at ease with adults and feel able to share any concerns they may have. All adults know how to report these concerns, no matter how small they may seem. Concerns are acted on swiftly by leaders.

However, there are some instances where leaders do not always record their follow-up actions in enough detail once a safeguarding concern has been addressed. While this does not put pupils at risk, leaders, including governors, need to ensure safeguarding record-keeping is more thoroughly reviewed to ensure additional follow-up actions and monitoring are always recorded robustly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Activities across the curriculum are not always precisely adapted to meet the specific needs of some pupils. This results in some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, having gaps in knowledge that are not being filled quickly enough or they are not always given work that is suitably ambitious. This means these pupils fall behind. The school needs to support staff to precisely adapt activities so that these pupils catch up quickly.
- Some pupils who find reading tricky are not catching up rapidly enough. Leaders need to use their checks on reading more effectively to ensure additional support is exactly tailored towards the specific barriers to reading these pupils need to overcome. Staff need to ensure these pupils get regular opportunity to rehearse their reading. Pupils need books that are exactly matched to the sounds they are learning so they more swiftly become fluent and independent readers.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Dogsthorpe Infant School, to be good in December 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147808
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10288578
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alastair Kingsley
CEO of the trust	Dr Helen Price
Headteacher	Rebecca Waters
Website	www.dogsthorpeinfants.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dogsthorpe Infant School converted to become an academy school in December 2020. When its predecessor school, Dogsthorpe Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of Hampton Academies Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a before-school club run by school staff that operates daily.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior staff, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum and talked to other subject leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with the trust's CEO.
- The inspector spoke to the chair of the trustees, who is currently also the chair of the local governing board. The inspector also met the vice chair of the local governing board and another trustee.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governor/trustee minutes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, which included 14 free-text comments. There were 16 responses to the staff surveys. Fourteen pupils answered the pupil survey. In addition, the inspector spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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